

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
DISTRICT OF SOUTH CAROLINA

Tyrone Lamar Roberson, # 191327,) C/A No. 2:11-1486-CMC-BHH
)
)
Petitioner,)
) REPORT AND RECOMMENDATION
vs.)
)
Leroy Cartledge, Warden of McCormick Correctional Institution of S.C. Dept. Of Corrections; and Alan Wilson, Attorney General of South Carolina,)
)
)
Respondents.)
)

Petitioner, Tyrone Lamar Roberson (“Petitioner”), a self-represented state prisoner confined in the South Carolina Department of Corrections’ McCormick Correctional Institution in McCormick, South Carolina, has filed this habeas corpus action pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254. This matter is before the Court pursuant to 28 U.S.C. §636(b)(1)(B) and Local Civil Rule 73.02(B)(2)(c) (DSC) for initial screening. Petitioner is serving a sentence of life imprisonment for murder; twenty-five (25) years, consecutive, for armed robbery; and fifteen (15) years, consecutive, for second degree burglary. The convictions and sentences followed Petitioner’s entry of guilty pleas in Jasper County General Sessions Court, on October 23, 1992. Petitioner has previously filed three other § 2254 petitions in this Court challenging these same state court convictions and sentences. See *Roberson v. Padula*, C/A No. 8:06-1247-CMC-BHH (D.S.C. 2006); *Roberson v. Eagleton*, C/A No. 8:03-723-CMC-BHH (D.S.C. 2003); *Roberson v. Warden*, C/A No. 8:01-4090-FBH-BHH (D.S.C.

2001).¹ In C/A No. 01-4090, Respondent's motion for summary judgment was granted and Petitioner's § 2254 petition was dismissed by this Court. This Court's judgment in C/A No. 01-4090 was affirmed on appeal by the United States Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit, in *Roberson v. Warden*, No. 02-7781 (4th Cir. 2003). Petitioner's second § 2254 petition, in C/A No. 03-723, was summarily dismissed without prejudice, as this Court lacked jurisdiction to consider it because Petitioner failed to obtain authorization from the Fourth Circuit before filing the action. Petitioner's third § 2254 petition, in C/A No. 06-1247, was also dismissed without prejudice, due to lack of jurisdiction, because Petitioner filed it without the Fourth Circuit's authorization. In C/A No. 06-1247, Petitioner's motion for a certificate of appealability was denied and his appeal of this Court's judgment was dismissed by the Fourth Circuit, in *Roberson v. Padula*, C/A No. 06-7328 (4th Cir. 2006). Having reviewed the instant Petition and applicable law, the Court finds that this successive § 2254 Petition must be summarily dismissed.

PRO SE HABEAS REVIEW

Under established local procedure in this judicial district, a careful review has been made of the *pro se* Petition filed in this case pursuant to the Rules Governing § 2254 Cases, 28 U.S.C. foll. § 2254; and the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act of 1996, Pub. L. No. 104-132, 110 Stat. 1214; and in light of the following precedents: *Denton v. Hernandez*, 504 U.S. 25 (1992); *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 324-25 (1989); *Haines v. Kerner*, 404 U.S. 519 (1972); *Nasim v. Warden, Md. House of Corr.*, 64 F.3d 951

¹ The Court takes judicial notice of Petitioner's prior district and circuit court proceedings. See *Colonial Penn Ins. Co. v. Coil*, 887 F.2d 1236, 1239 (4th Cir. 1989) ("We note that 'the most frequent use of judicial notice is in noticing the content of court records.'").

(4th Cir. 1995) (*en banc*); *Todd v. Baskerville*, 712 F.2d 70 (4th Cir. 1983). This Court is charged with screening Petitioner's habeas petition and attachments to determine if "it plainly appears from the petition and any attached exhibits that the petitioner is not entitled to relief in the district court." Rule 4 of Rules Governing § 2254 Cases, 28 U.S.C. foll. § 2254; see also Rule 1(b) of Rules Governing § 2254, 28 U.S.C. foll. § 2254 (a district court may apply these rules to a habeas corpus petition not filed pursuant to § 2254).

This Court is required to liberally construe *pro se* petitions. *Erickson v. Pardus*, 551 U.S. 89 (2007). *Pro se* petitions are held to a less stringent standard than those drafted by attorneys, *id*; *Gordon v. Leeke*, 574 F.2d 1147, 1151 (4th Cir. 1978), and a federal district court is charged with liberally construing a petition filed by a *pro se* litigant to allow the development of a potentially meritorious case. *Hughes v. Rowe*, 449 U.S. 5, 9 (1980); *Cruz v. Beto*, 405 U.S. 319 (1972). When a federal court is evaluating a *pro se* petition the petitioner's allegations are assumed to be true. *Erickson*, 551 U.S. at 93 (citing *Bell Atlantic Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 555-56 (2007)). However, the requirement of liberal construction does not mean that the court can ignore a clear failure in the pleading to allege facts which set forth a claim currently cognizable in a federal district court. *Weller v. Dep't of Soc. Servs.*, 901 F.2d 387 (4th Cir. 1990). The mandated liberal construction afforded to *pro se* pleadings means that if the court can reasonably read the pleadings to state a valid claim on which the petitioner could prevail, it should do so; however, a district court may not rewrite a petition to include claims that were never presented, *Barnett v. Hargett*, 174 F.3d 1128 (10th Cir. 1999), construct the petitioner's legal arguments for him, *Small v. Endicott*, 998 F.2d 411 (7th Cir. 1993), or "conjure up questions never squarely presented" to the court, *Beaudett v. City of Hampton*, 775 F.2d 1274, 1278 (4th Cir. 1985).

Even under this less stringent standard, it plainly appears from the instant Petition that this Court lacks jurisdiction to hear the Petition. Accordingly, the Petition submitted in this case should be summarily dismissed.

DISCUSSION

Under 28 U.S.C. § 2244(b)(3)(A), “[b]efore a second or successive [§ 2254] application permitted by this section is filed in the district court, the applicant *shall move* in the appropriate court of appeals for an order authorizing the district court to consider the application.” (emphasis added).

(B) A motion in the court of appeals for an order authorizing the district court to consider a second or successive application shall be determined by a three-judge panel of the court of appeals.

(C) The court of appeals may authorize the filing of a second or successive application only if it determines that the application makes a *prima facie* showing that the application satisfies the requirements of this subsection.

(D) The court of appeals shall grant or deny the authorization to file a second or successive application not later than 30 days after the filing of the motion.

(E) The grant or denial of an authorization by a court of appeals to file a second or successive application shall not be appealable and shall not be the subject of a petition for rehearing or for a writ of certiorari.

28 U.S.C. § 2244(b)(3)(B) - (E).²

Hence, the threshold issue in this case is whether Petitioner has complied with the provisions of § 28 U.S.C. § 2244(b)(3)(A)-(E) and Rule 9 of the Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases in the United States District Courts, which govern an action in which a

² Rule 9 of the Rules Governing Section 2254 Cases in the United States District Courts reiterates this requirement, stating that “[b]efore presenting a second or successive petition, the petitioner must obtain an order from the appropriate court of appeals, authorizing the district court to consider the petition as required by 28 U.S.C. § 2244(b)(3) and (4).”

petitioner, who is in custody pursuant to the judgment of a state court, seeks to present claims in a second or successive habeas corpus application under § 2254.

Pursuant to the cited statute and rule, when a petitioner has previously litigated a § 2254 petition, he or she must, “[b]efore a second or successive application permitted by this section is filed in the district court,” . . . “move in the appropriate court of appeals for an order authorizing the district court to consider the application.” 28 U.S.C. § 2244(b)(3)(A). As the Fourth Circuit explained in *In re Williams*, 364 F.3d 235, 238 (4th Cir. 2004), the “initial determination of whether a claim satisfies” the requirements of § 2244(b)(2) “must be made by a court of appeals.” See also *United States v. Winestock*, 340 F.3d 200, 205 (4th Cir. 2003) (“In the absence of pre-filing authorization, the district court lacks jurisdiction to consider an application containing abusive or repetitive claims.”); *In re Fowlkes*, 326 F.3d 542, 544 (4th Cir. 2003) (“Since Fowlkes has previously filed a section 2254 motion, he may only file a successive section 2254 motion if he receives authorization from this court [(the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals)] under the standard established in section 2244(b)(3)(C).”); *Thomas v. Bodison*, No. 6:09-2200-HMH-WMC, at *2 (D.S.C. Nov. 9, 2009) (“In the absence of pre-filing authorization from the court of appeals, the district court is without jurisdiction to consider a second or successive application.”). Such a motion has not been filed in the Fourth Circuit by Petitioner, and such an order making the required determination to authorize this Court to consider this successive § 2254 petition has not been issued by the Fourth Circuit. Consequently, this District Court has no jurisdiction to consider the instant Petition and Petitioner is barred from attacking his state court convictions and sentences in this Court. Therefore, as Petitioner has not obtained an order of the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals authorizing this

Court to consider this second § 2254 application for a writ of habeas corpus, the Petition should be dismissed.

RECOMMENDATION

Accordingly, it is recommended that the instant Application for a Writ of Habeas Corpus, filed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 2254, be dismissed without prejudice and without issuance and service of process upon Respondent. See *Erline Co. S.A. v. Johnson*, 440 F.3d 648, 656 (4th Cir. 2006) (district courts are charged with the duty to independently screen initial filings and dismiss those actions that plainly lack merit without requesting an answer from the respondent).

Petitioner's attention is directed to the important notice on the next page.

s/Bruce Howe Hendricks
United States Magistrate Judge

August 9, 2011
Charleston, South Carolina

Notice of Right to File Objections to Report and Recommendation

The parties are advised that they may file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation with the District Judge. Objections must specifically identify the portions of the Report and Recommendation to which objections are made and the basis for such objections. "[I]n the absence of a timely filed objection, a district court need not conduct a de novo review, but instead must 'only satisfy itself that there is no clear error on the face of the record in order to accept the recommendation.'" *Diamond v. Colonial Life & Acc. Ins. Co.*, 416 F.3d 310 (4th Cir. 2005) (quoting Fed. R. Civ. P. 72 advisory committee's note).

Specific written objections must be filed within fourteen (14) days of the date of service of this Report and Recommendation. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); Fed. R. Civ. P. 72(b); see Fed. R. Civ. P. 6(a), (d). Filing by mail pursuant to Federal Rule of Civil Procedure 5 may be accomplished by mailing objections to:

Larry W. Propes, Clerk
United States District Court
Post Office Box 835
Charleston, South Carolina 29402

Failure to timely file specific written objections to this Report and Recommendation will result in waiver of the right to appeal from a judgment of the District Court based upon such Recommendation. 28 U.S.C. § 636(b)(1); *Thomas v. Arn*, 474 U.S. 140 (1985); *Wright v. Collins*, 766 F.2d 841 (4th Cir. 1985); *United States v. Schronce*, 727 F.2d 91 (4th Cir. 1984).